# PACENET

## PRESIDENT'S PAGE
### by Sue Bergstrand

"The Road goes ever on and on

Down from the door where it began.

Now far ahead the Road has gone,

And I must follow, if I can,

Pursuing it withe eager feet,

Until it joins some larger way

Where many paths and errands meet.

And whither then? I cannot say."

J.R.R.Tolkien
The Lord of the Rings

It's unusual for our group to have a president leave office in the middle of the year, but some of you may know that when I to n the office a year and a half ago, I traded the office of ne. tter editor for that of president because I might be relocating for a new job on short notice, and I felt that it would be easier to break in a new president on short notice than a new newsletter editor. We now have the opportunity to test that theory. Lucy G. Rhoda has been doing very well as newsletter editor for the last year and a half, and Bill Colburn will be taking on the presidency on the 27th of June. As for me, I'm moving to Kansas City, Missouri, to start a new job in laboratory automation/computer support, and will have left the Philadelphia area before the July meeting.

My folks still live in New Jersey, so I may be back to visit around the holidays, but I think it's reasonably safe to say that you won't be seeing a great deal of me from here on out. I have accounts on both CompuServe (72347,1175) and GEnie (sbergstrand). I will be keeping up my PACS membership and occasionally dialing into the PACS BBS, so you'll be able to reach me by E-mail. (I've told Ron Stoloff that I'll be the DATA BUS's Kansas City correspondent. You may not see me around, but you haven't heard the last of me!!) I'll warn you not to rush though -- I probably won't have my systems unpacked and back up until late July. I expect to look into Kansas City Atari groups once I get settled out there (although I may take the opportunity to sit in the audience and take it easy for a while!!) We don't currently exchange newsletters with any groups in Kansas City, but you can ex  that that will change before the end of the year!!

I'd like to thank all the people who have been supportive during my terms as president and newsletter editor; I've made many good friends through PACS, and i'll miss you al wen I move away. I will try to keep in touch, one way or aother, and hope you'll do the same. And if you're ever in Kansas City, look me up, and I'll take you out for a steak dinner. I hope you'll support our new officers as well -- Bill Colburn as president, and our new disk livrarian, Eric Zwirnmann. And I hope you'll write more for the PACENET, as with my departure, Lucy's losing one of her most faithful writers. And the best of luck to you in the Philadelphia AtariFest (your mission, if you choose to accept it, Mr. Phelps...) Long life, good health, and keep those Ataris busy!!

THE PACENET NEEDS YOUR ARTICLES!!

## PACS BBS IS UP!!!
by Rich Freedman

It has been a loooong wait, BUT the PACS BBS is up and running at this very moment (honest...really!!)!!!

The board is running on a UNIX system with 140 Megabytes of storage. Each sub-board, including the ATARI 516's, will initially have about 30 Megabytes. This is, of course, subject to change. 140 Mb sounds expensive?!? PACS Vice-President, Steve Weissman, assures us that the entire system has cost only $10,000 of the $15,000 allotted. That's 33% under budget!!! I think that the two Steves (Longo and Weissman) are to be heartily thanked and congratulated! It is quite obvious that they will never get jobs with the Federal Government!!

As I stated: The board is RUNNING!! However, it will be a little while before all the features are implemented. As of the second week of June, only the message bases and private E-mail are working. Xmodem and Kermit file transfers will be implemented soon (maybe by the time you read this). Also promised soon, although I wouldn't hold my breath, is 40-column screen formatting for those of us who haven't gotten our XEP-80's. What I like to stress is that an awful lot of work has gone into getting this board running. PLEASE HAVE PATIENCE with those who have worked, and continue to work very hard to bring this board to life. The little niceties will come...slowly, BUT they will come. We'll welcome your suggestions for improvements and additions, but please realize that not everything is possible and that this is not going to be Compuserve. (Maybe it'll be better!!)

"How," you may ask, "do I gain access to the PACS Multi-SIG Bulletin Board?" If you're not a PACS member in good standing (dues paid), the first step is to JOIN and/or pay your dues. To get an account on this system, you MUST be a PACS member in good standing. Next, either mail in the application that should be in this monthe's DATA BUS or contact either of the co-sysops. We are:

Rich Freedman (215) 742-6992 (Home number -- leave a message if I'm not there, and don't be afraid to call late.)

Jay Freedman (215) 657-2369 (Home number -- no calls after 9 p.m. please.)

Within a few days of your application, an account will be yours. If you have any questions at all, feel free to call me or Jay.

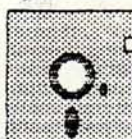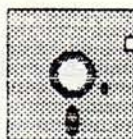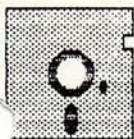SEE 'YA ONLINE!!!

## FROM THE EDITOR'S COMPUTER
by Lucy G. Rhoda

I dread "farewells". However, I must at this time submit a few words of appreciation to our out-going president, Sue Bergstrand. Sue has done so much for PACENET and for our users' group. Without her support and leadership, I doubt if we'd be where we are today. She has been especially helpful to me in my role as newsletter editor. Not knowing half the time what to do or even in some cases, how to do certain things, Sue has been there to help. Her knowledge and patience has been amazing. Working with a novice on the computer and on a newsletter, she never gave-up on me!! I am still slowly learning all there is to learn about an ATARI and its many uses. However, technology in both hardware and software is rapidly changing and by the time I discover something new for me, it's "old hats" to most of our members. I often wonder if I will ever catch up and understand all the jargon that goes on in the computer world. I enjoy doing the newsletter but I must confess, that at times, I don't always enjoy the frustrations that I get some of the time. One of my biggest headache is getting contributions from the many members that we have. I know many of you can send me a disk or hardcopy of an article. My other problem is the modem. It doesn't always cooperate when I need it the most. What often takes a few minutes for some, has taken a long time for others. Sue and Ed will tell you the countless of times when I felt quite inept and frustrated. However, as I said before, speaking of Sue, she was always calm and cooperative during these bouts. I will miss her and her articles. She deserves a "standing ovation" for all she has done for our organization. Hopefully, when she is settled and gets the time, she will surprise us with an article or two. In the meantime, I want to say "Best of luck to you always. Enjoy Kansas City and your new job. We will certainly miss you at our meetings."

I must also say: Thank you!! Thank you!! to some other members. We have some new contributers to this month's newsletter. Jay Freedman and Rich Freedman have added some articles to the PACENET. Thank you "guys"!! Hopefully, these new "faces" will encourage others to contribute as well. All you have to do is put on disk or paper your thoughts about a program you wrote or modified; a review about a software package; and/or your feelings about being an Atari user. If you are worried about your English: FORGET IT!! As the editor, I usually take care of any "writings" problems and correct anything that needs fixing!! If you wish to transfer via modem, I must warn you that it takes time and PATIENCE!! This is especially true when my modem and 800 decide to play tricks!! My address is located elsewhere with the advertising information should you decide to send me an article. All I ask is that it be in around the second Saturday or Monday of the month so that I have everything ready by our meeting.

# FIRST XLENT WORD PROCESSOR

## A review by Jay Freedman

I write for a living, and I must have tried 15 or 20 different editors and word processors over the years. Some fail because they don't have enough power, speed, or features, while others are so cumbersome that they intrude on the job of writing (as opposed to using software). Only rarely does a program succeed in balancing power with ease of use well enough to become a good tool. It's amazing when that program runs on an unmodified 48K Atari 800.

This little wonder is the FIRST XLENT WORD PROCESSOR, from XLEnt Software (P.O. Box 5228, Springfield, VA 22150). Compounding the amazement, the program's list price is $29.95, and it's available from a number of mailorder houses for less than $20.

The basic word-processing features are just the beginning. First XLEnt has the usual insert/overtype toggle, easy-to-set tabs, search and replace, block copy, block delete, cut-and-paste headers and footers (with margins independent of the text margins), mail merge, file chaining...You name it!!

But this program also has a lot of thoughtful extras that really make it shine. For example, you can have two windows with completely independent documents simultaneously. First XLEnt has chosen to make each window full-screen rather than split the screen in two; with the Atari's limited number of characters per screen, this makes sense. The trade-off is that you can't see both documents at the same time.

Actually, there is a third window, the cut-and-paste buffer. Since you can edit and access the disk functions directly from the buffer, it does work as a window. The drawback here is that the buffer is only 800 characters -- exactly one screen. Although you can't cut-and-paste more than 800 characters at a time, that's usually enough. As an aid to moving bigger blocks, you can set up to five invisible "markers" in the text and jump directly to any one of them.

You can save part of a file, and insert a file from disk into the document at any point without losing the end of the original document. You can view a disk file without disturbing the document in memory. (First XLEnt calls this "spooling", a term more often associated with printing. The program also supports print spooling, but only for the Atari 130XEs.) Files are saved in straight ASCII format, which makes it great as an editor for compilers and assemblers (or even BASIC's ENTER command) and for creating files to send via modem.

First XLEnt has an 80-column print preview that is readable even on a not-so-great TV. The preview screen has a slow mode (with a corny simulation of a printer's printhead running back and forth) and a fast mode that really zips along. You can toggle back and forth between modes at any time with the Break key.

On the XL and XE machines, the program can print double columns, either one-pass (which has some restrictions) or two-pass (which has no restrictions, but requires rolling the paper backwards for each page).

You can print graphics within your document (as long as you get them into the uncompressed 62-sector format or BGraph graph format). The First XLEnt disk includes a Picture Formatter program that allows you to add text to a picture, select part of a screen, center or left-align the picture, or reverse to white-on-black.

You can set up a batch file contaning the names of files to be printed. This works muck like file chaining, but it's easier to change the batch file than the chaining directives of several files.

In general, the program takes the right approach to warning you when you're about to do something irreversible, such as clearing memory or overwriting a disk file. I haven't lost anything yet...although the gremlins are sure to strike someday.

Of course, there are a few rough spots (that's why programs have revisions). One that I find especially annoying: this is one of the few word processors in which overtype is the default mode. Every time I start the program, I have to remember to shift to insert mode. At least it's easy to tell (by the border color) which mode you're in, which is better than that PC with the three-letter name.

A quirk compounds the problems: if you are in insert mode, and go to the print preview and come back, the mode will have changed to overtype again. This definitely ought to be fixed!!

The cut-and-paste buffer ought to be larger, say up to half of the free memory. In an 800XL with no document loaded, there are about 29K bytes of free memory, and documents bigger than 15K or so probably ought to be broken into smaller files anyway.

The utility program that creates printer drivers, while workable, could be easier to use. It accepts all input on the top line and overwrites it as it goes; there's no way to see what has been put in to know if it needs correction.

Obviously, the plusses vastly out weigh the minuses. To quote Charles Cherry's review in the January 1987 issue of ANTIC, "Overall, First XLEnt Word Processor is a great software. Although not perfect, it's as good as or better than any other word processor for the 8-bit Atari." It's certainly my favorite.

## 1987 ATARI USERS' GROUP OFFICERS

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| PRESIDENT: | William T. Colburn | 247-2906 |
| VICE-PRESIDENT: | | |
| EDITOR/SECRETARY: | Lucy G. Rhoda | 635-1009 |
| DISK LIBRARIAN: | Eric Zwirnmann | 342-8263 |

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## Public Domain Library

### P.A.C.S. members

1) the first disk is one dollar ($1.00)
2) each disk after that is two dollars ($2.00)
3) one free disk for each disk donated to the library

### NON - P.A.C.S. members

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NOTE:  The deadline for any ad is the second Saturday of every month in order to be in that month's newsletter. Therefore, the ad is due on July 11, 1987 in order to make the July issue of PACENET.